

## **Automated Monitoring Sparks New Problems For Broadcasting Commission**

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Expansion of the local media landscape, reflected in the explosion of community and other radio stations, as well as additions to the number of free-to-air television channels, has made the task of content monitoring much harder for the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica (BCJ).

A statutory body established by the 1986 amendment to the Broadcasting and Radio Re-Diffusion Act, the Commission lists its vision as becoming the "cutting-edge regulator that leads in the development and advancement of a dynamic electronic communications sector for the benefit of Jamaica and the Caribbean Community".

However, that task is being made much harder by the sheer content from traditional media streams, as well as the increased work load from new and emerging platforms via social media. This has forced the regulatory agency to review its monitoring capability, recognising the critical need to catch up.

"We do need to build our capacity for, let's say, automated content monitoring, relying less on the physical and being able to follow content, irrespective of platform, and we have been exploring this now for, I think, about three years," Cordel Green, executive director of the Commission, said as he addressed a Gleaner Editor's Forum on Thursday.

However, with automated monitoring comes another set of problems.

"The technology is available for us to do some of what we want to do, but we have come upon two challenges. One is that some of the content, traditional content we are dealing

with, it's in the Jamaican vernacular. And if it's not in the Jamaican vernacular, it is in somebody else's vernacular. People create these things, and so voice-recognition technology, and the limitations there, is something we have to take into account," Green disclosed.

He went on to point out other shortfalls of cutting-edge technology.

"We just assumed that the technology would have been available now to easily disaggregate lyrics from melody. So you hear a song and some technology could easily go in there, take the words out, but now it doesn't work that way.

"The available technology sees that as noise and confusion, but we recognise that in terms of the work that is going to be required to build capacity to follow content online, we wouldn't be breaking new ground. It's already available."

### **... Regulatory systems must adapt quickly, says BCJ**

In a media brief prepared for The Gleaner Editors' Forum last Thursday, the Broadcasting Commission points out that in the past, the media industry was organised, legislated, and regulated by infrastructure (radio, television, telephone, print, etc), which imposed clear divisions and boundaries. Now, with content flowing over many different networks and technologies, its monitoring and regulatory functions have been made that much more difficult.

This has resulted in news, information, entertainment, education, home management and shopping, translations, and many other services being live-streamed to the nearest screening, giving birth to another set of attendant issues.

"This transition has happened much more rapidly than the necessary regulatory and legislative reform. If our regulatory systems do not now adapt, there is a risk that they will bring increasingly disproportionate pressure to bear on the dwindling band of traditional

media providers, which will encourage even more consumers to abandon them and migrate to unregulated, informal, and or illegal sources,' the Commission warns.